

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A telephone answering device, comprising:

a telephone line interface;

a controller;

voice message memory adapted to store a plurality of voice messages; and

a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to said telephone answering device who may secure a voice message in a mailbox of said telephone answering device.

2. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a playback/recorder module adapted to record said voice message.

3. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

an authorized security code table including information relating to an ability of said calling party to separately secure said voice message.

4. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 3, wherein:

said authorized security code table further includes at least one security code allowing at least one telephone answering device user access to said separately secured voice message.

5. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 3, wherein:

said authorized security code table is adapted to include call related information relating to at least one calling party authorized to secure a voice message.

6. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said secured message authorization module is adapted to allow said calling party to secure a voice message upon entry by said calling party of an authorized security code corresponding to a given one of said plurality of telephone answering device users.

7. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said secured message authorization module is adapted to allow said calling party to secure a voice message upon matching of call related information relating to said calling party to at least one pre-stored entry of call related information regarding an ability to secure a voice message.

8. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said plurality of voice messages stored in said voice message memory includes header information, said header information including a secure status of said voice message.

9. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a call related information detector/receiver adapted to detect and receive call related information regarding said calling party.

10. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said controller is adapted to compare call related information received regarding said calling party with at least one pre-stored authorized security code to allow said calling party to separately secure said voice message.

11. (previously presented) A method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message to enter an authorized security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to said telephone answering device who may secure a voice message;

comparing said authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code; and

upon matching said entered authorized security code with said pre-stored authorized security code, securing said voice message for access by at least one telephone answering device user authorized to play back said voice message.

12. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed after said voice message is recorded.

13. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed while said voice message is being recorded.

14. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed before said voice message is recorded.

15. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, further comprising:

entering said authorized security code from a telephone being used by said calling party.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (previously presented) Apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

means for prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code corresponding to at least one pre-authorized caller to said telephone answering device who may secure a voice message;

means for comparing said authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code; and

means for securing in said voice message for access by at least one telephone answering device user authorized to play back said voice message upon matching said entered authorized security code with said pre-stored authorized security code.

19. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message after said voice message is recorded.

20. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message while said voice message is being recorded.

21. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message before said voice message is recorded.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, further comprising:

means for entering said authorized security code from a telephone being used by said calling party.

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)